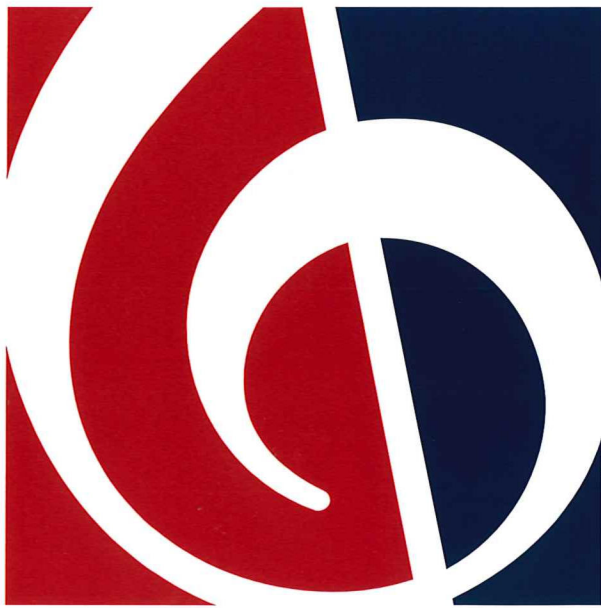


CD 2003--19/20

FACULTY *of* MUSIC



2002-2003

WHERE GREAT MUSIC MEETS GREAT MINDS

Saturday, February 1, 2003
8 pm. MacMillan Theatre

Faculty of Music
Presents

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Raffi Armenian, conductor

PROGRAMME

Hector Berlioz
1803-1869

Roman Carnival Overture
Adine Mintz, conductor

Franz Liszt
1811-1886

Piano Concerto No.1
Allegro maestoso
Quasi adagio - Allegretto vivace -
Allegro animato
Allegro marziale animato

Eldon Ng, piano

INTERMISSION

Jan Sibelius
1865-1957

Symphony No. 1
Andante - Allegro energico
Andante ma non troppo lento
Scherzo - Allegro
Finale - Andante



Sponsor of the 2002-2003 Orchestra Series

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Programme Notes

Roman Carnival Overture

HECTOR BERLIOZ

Born in La Côte-St-André, France, 1803

Died in Paris, 1869

Born into the family of a physician in a provincial French town near Grenoble, Hector Berlioz learned to play the flute and guitar in his youth. In accordance with his father's wishes, he went to Paris to study medicine, but in 1823 abandoned his medical studies to devote himself to music. A true Romantic (in more ways than one) in 1827 he fell in love with the Irish actress Henrietta Smithson, who appeared as Ophelia in a Paris performance of *Hamlet* – and pursued her relentlessly, undeterred by the fact that he spoke no English and she spoke no French. Remarkably, the two were married in 1833 – but the union soon broke down.

Berlioz enjoyed a flamboyant career as a conductor, famous (and controversial) for his concerts employing vast orchestral forces. In 1844 at the Paris Exhibition of Industrial Products he led an orchestra of 1,022 players in works by Beethoven, Weber and himself. In 1847 he traveled to Russia, and the following year he led orchestras in England. Engagements in the German states and Austria followed.

Yet despite his celebrity on the podium, and as the composer of such orchestral works as *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Le Corsaire*, he did not have much luck with opera. None of his three mature operas – *Benevenuto Cellini*, *Béatrice et Bénédict* or the vast *Les Troyens* – achieved popularity during his lifetime. (Parisian musical taste at the time was firmly directed towards Italian *bel canto* opera.) *Benevenuto Cellini*, based on the life of the famous Italian Renaissance artist, was particularly unsuccessful, flopping at its Paris

premiere in 1838 and closing after just three performances.

But Berlioz was a resourceful man: he put the overture of *Benevenuto Cellini* to good use as a concert work, and in this context it was well received on his European tours. The theatrical roots of the piece are abundantly clear. Following a short introduction, a warm melody is introduced by the English horn – the aria “O Teresa, vous que j’aime” from the opera. Also, the saltarello dance-music, featuring lively strings and a liberal use of the tambourine, is based on the Act II carnival scene in the opera. As the piece approaches its climax, the wild dance is interrupted with striking contrapuntal episodes, until it culminates in a brassy *tutti finale*.

Piano Concerto No. 1

FRANZ LISZT

Born in Raiding, Austria, 1811

Died in Bayreuth, Germany, 1886

According to legend, Beethoven attended Franz Liszt's first concert in Vienna, in 1823, and kissed the 12-year-old pianist on the forehead. Other, more substantial, influences on Liszt included instruction from Carl Czerny and Antonio Salieri, who gave the young musician a solid grounding in Viennese traditions. His interest in Central-European folk-music may have been inspired through lessons in Paris with the Czech composer Anton Reicha; and his cultivation of virtuosity is often attributed to his exposure to Niccolò Paganini's brilliant violin-playing.

As a result of his upbringing and education, Liszt's nationality is perhaps best described as “European.” He was a cosmopolitan polyglot who was both a Freemason and a devout Roman Catholic,

who described himself as “half Franciscan, half Gypsy.” And despite his fame, he was known to utter words of surprising modesty. He once said to Richard Wagner, “You can be assured that I harbour not the slightest vanity concerning my works, and even if I produced nothing good and beautiful in my entire life, I would rejoice no less truly and intimately at the good and beautiful that I recognize in others.”

Liszt wrote 17 works for piano with orchestra, although only seven were published in his lifetime. His *Concerto No. 1* in E-flat major – un-coincidentally, the same key as Beethoven’s *Emperor* concerto – was premiered in 1855; Liszt was the soloist and Berlioz conducted.

A prominent feature of the four-movement work is the frequent occurrence of solo outbursts from the piano – we first hear such an episode in measure four of the first movement – giving the impression that the piece is built around its cadenzas. But this concerto is more than simply a vehicle for virtuosic pianism: note the elegant woodwind solos set against the extended piano trill in the second movement, or the deft use of the triangle in the third movement (for this reason, it is sometimes called the “Triangle Concerto.”). As well, there are sophisticated cyclical ideas: for example, the themes from the first movement recur, much transformed, at the end of the third.

Symphony No. 1

JEAN SIBELIUS

Born in Hämeenlinna, Finland, 1865

Died in Järvenpää, Finland, 1957

Thanks to the success of his first string quartet, premiered in 1889, Jean Sibelius was awarded a government stipend to further his studies in Berlin and Vienna. The experience opened up vast new

horizons for the talented young man: he was introduced to the music of Wagner and Bruckner, and rapidly developed his skills as an orchestral composer. When, in 1892, his large tone-poem *Kullervo* was first performed in Helsinki, he established himself as a prominent Finnish nationalist. Other works inspired by his country’s folklore followed: *En Saga*, *Karelia*, *Four Legends* and incidental music for the play *King Christian II*.

Sibelius began his first symphony in Berlin in 1898, applying himself assiduously to his work, despite the distractions of an intemperate lifestyle. He struggled to reform himself, promising his wife: “I will write and tell you, Aino, just how much I drink and smoke, absolutely truthfully.” It seems the hard-living Finn was even involved in a street brawl, which left him with a nasty gash on his forehead. But for all the German capital’s attractions, the 32-year-old composer fell victim to homesickness, and later that year he returned to his native land. Soon after he arrived in Helsinki, Finland – then a Duchy of the Russian Crown – was plunged into a political crisis when the Czar stripped the Finnish parliament of its autonomous powers. Sibelius’ sympathies, naturally, lay with his fellow Finns.

Given Sibelius’ nationalist sympathies and his Germanic musical education, it’s surprising that his *Symphony No. 1* should have come out sounding so Russian. The work, which was well received at its premiere in April 1899, has been called “Tchaikovsky’s Seventh.” Sibelius certainly knew Tchaikovsky’s works – his symphonies were performed in Helsinki – and he even went so far as to acknowledge the influence of the Russian composer, remarking, “There is much in that man that I recognize in myself.”

Written in four movements, Sibelius’ first essay as a symphonist does little to

challenge traditional symphonic form. The first movement is in sonata form and begins with a languid melody played on the clarinet that is later played by the strings in the final movement. The second movement is a rondo, marked *andante*; the third is a scherzo and trio. Tchaikovsky's influence can be heard in long melodic lines, "exotic" harmonies and colourful orchestration. But there are other influences as well: moments of "chamber music" suggestive of Mahler, and a

scherzo that recalls Bruckner. There are also nascent signs of Sibelius' own mature style – especially his imaginative use of the timpani.

Sibelius' musical idiom was rooted in the 19th century; but his *Symphony No. 1* was in fact his only symphony written before the year 1900. Through his subsequent cultivation of the genre, he established himself as one of the great symphonists of the 20th century.

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Biographies

Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto, **Raffi Armenian** was trained in the European tradition. In Vienna he studied piano, conducting, voice and composition with Bruno Seidlhofer, Hans Swarowsky, Ferdinand Grossmann and Alfred Uhl respectively.

Maestro Armenian has conducted a television version of Menotti's *The Medium* which was nominated for an Emmy Award that season. He received a Juno nomination for a recording of Ravel and Schoenberg with one of Canada's great singers, Maureen Forrester, and the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which he founded. In 1988, The CCE was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque from the Canadian Music Council for its *Serenades* album, which was subsequently nominated for a Juno Award. Repertoire from the Ensemble's *Music from Berlin in the 1920s* was selected by Woody Allen to underscore his film *Shadows and Fog*.

Sought after as a guest conductor, Mr. Armenian has led the Belgian Radio Orchestra, the Enescu Philharmonic of Bucharest at the Ravenna International Music Festival, the Montreal Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Edmonton

Symphony, the Hamilton Philharmonic and Violon du Roy.

Maestro Armenian held the position of Music Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for 22 years and worked with such illustrious companies as the Canadian Opera Company, Michigan Opera Theater, l'Opéra de Montréal, Opera Columbus and for the famed Indiana University School of Music. Kitchener-Waterloo's acoustically superb "Centre in the Square" has a main theatre named Raffi Armenian Theatre. The design was strongly influenced by Maestro Armenian.

The Armenian legacy is secured by his highly acclaimed performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* in which tenor Jon Vickers made his final appearance in 1989. He recently conducted *La Belle Hélène* at l'Opéra de Québec and Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Opera Hamilton. Mr. Armenian is a recipient of the Order of Canada and Honorary Doctorates from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo.

Adine Mintz is completing her Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting with Raffi Armenian. She completed her Bachelor's degree in music education at the University of Toronto as a piano major in 2001.

During her undergraduate years,

Adine Mintz was a member of the University of Toronto Concert Choir and MacMillan Singers. She also conducted both choirs in rehearsals, as well as working with the Elmer Iseler Singers as part of the choral conducting courses. In March 2001, she made her operatic singing debut as "le pouff" in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, presented by the Faculty of Music Opera Division. In November 2002, Adine made her operatic conducting debut with the Opera Division in a shortened version of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

On March 1, 2003, Adine will conduct the University of Toronto Chamber Ensemble in Steve Reich's *Tehilim*, a 30-minute work for four female voices, percussion and chamber orchestra.

Adine attended the Claude Watson School for the Arts, during which time she conducted various choirs, bands and orchestras. In her final year, she was the

conductor of the Earl Haig Men's Chorus, who tied for first at the Kiwanis Music Festival. Since January 2001, Adine has been the conductor of the St. Clement Community Orchestra.

Eldon Ng is a second year Master degree student studying piano performance under Marietta Orloff. At the Kiwanis Music Festival of Greater Toronto, he has received the Miriam Russell Smith Trophy and Award for best junior piano concerto, the Senior Piano Rose Bowl, the President's Trophy and First Place in the 2000 Alumni Competition. Upon invitation from the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, Eldon participated in a concert tour, performing in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. He has appeared as a soloist with Toronto Philharmonia, the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

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Kenneth Peacock was a distinguished alumnus of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music. His body of work, as a composer and researcher for half a century, has made a significant impact on musical life in Canada. The Faculty of Music was very grateful to learn that Mr. Peacock had made a bequest to the University of Toronto in his will for the benefit of our music programs. With this legacy gift, the Faculty of Music will establish the Kenneth H. Peacock Lecture Series in Music in keeping with his lifelong interest in and contribution to the multi-dimensional study of music. Thank you Mr. Peacock.

For more information on Planned Giving please contact the Development Office of the Faculty of Music by calling 416-946-3145.

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Raffi Armenian, conductor

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Janacek: Mladi

Reich: Tehilim (*Adine Mintz, conductor*)

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